

February 19, 1999

Programs and Project Management

Dear Interested Party:

Since early 1997, the Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, has been working on a dam safety report and an accompanying environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Cherry Creek Dam in Denver, Colorado. This letter is being provided to explain the background and status of this effort, solicit your comments/opinions, and provide notice of upcoming public meetings.

The primary purpose of the Cherry Creek Dam Safety Project (Project) is to correct the hydrologic deficiency now found at the dam so that the Project can safely either accommodate or pass the probable maximum flood (PMF). Studies conducted for the Project will evaluate the various alternatives that could be used to correct the existing hydrologic deficiency.

In 1993, the Corps conducted a study that determined the Cherry Creek Dam was hydrologically deficient and did not meet established Corps safety requirements. This determination means that the Cherry Creek Dam cannot pass the PMF without failing. The PMF is defined as the largest flood that reasonably could occur as a result of the probable maximum precipitation (PMP) event. The PMP is defined as the maximum precipitation event that could occur as a result of extreme meteorological conditions. At present, Cherry Creek Dam can safely handle only 75 percent of the PMF. If Cherry Creek Dam were to fail due to the probable maximum flood, the potential for loss of life would be approximately 10,000 people, and monetary flood damages could approach \$5 billion (see enclosure 1).

The EIS will evaluate the environmental impacts associated with various alternatives. It is tentatively scheduled for distribution to the public in draft form in late September 1999 and will likely identify a preferred alternative.

A broad range of alternatives which may correct the hydrologic deficiency have been preliminarily evaluated based on their technical feasibility; their construction and operation costs; their prevention of downstream loss-of-life; and their environmental, social, and economic impacts. Alternatives that either pass or store the event have been narrowed to a dam raise alone, a new spillway in combination with a partial dam raise, a partial dam raise in combination with an upstream dry-dam, and an upstream dry-dam alone. Please see enclosure 2 for locations of the upstream dry-dams. Dry-dams would be designed to not hold permanent pools, but rather to pass all events in a controlled manner. Please be aware that this study is in a preliminary alternatives analysis stage. No alternatives have been proposed, nor are any reasonable alternatives precluded from analysis.

Public scoping/information meetings were held in March and July of 1997 as well as in April and November of 1998. The Corps conducted these meetings in an effort to inform the

public, solicit public opinion, invite public participation in alternatives development, and to identify potential impacts resulting from alternatives. At the time of the 1997 and early 1998 meetings, the Corps had preliminarily dismissed investigating solutions requiring upstream dry-dams. However, as investigations regarding cost and downstream loss-of-life progressed and as downstream entities' concerns became known, the need to further investigate an alternative that included an upstream dry-dam became necessary. As a result, the Corps attempted to organize and conduct additional public meetings that were targeted at upstream stakeholders. Those meetings were not highly successful. The Corps, with local stakeholder assistance, has further developed its list of stakeholders and is planning to return and conduct additional public meetings and workshops on March 8, 9, 10, and 11, 1999.

Once again, we want to solicit your comments, concerns, and suggestions for these alternatives as well as to identify significant environmental resources and concerns related to these alternatives. We will hold another set of public scoping/information meetings to present these alternatives to the public. The dates, times, and locations for these meetings are as follows:

Sheraton Four Points Hotel
 Denver Cherry Creek
 600 South Colorado Blvd.
 Denver, Colorado
 Monday, March 8, 1999
 Informal Presentation/Workshop*
 (4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.)
 Tuesday, March 9, 1999
 Informal Presentation/Workshop*
 (10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.)

Campus Middle School
 4785 South Dayton Street
 Englewood, Colorado
 Tuesday, March 9, 1999
 Formal Presentation (7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.)

Franktown Fire Station
 159 North State Highway 83
 Franktown, Colorado
 Wednesday, March 10, 1999
 Informal Presentation/Workshop*
 (10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.)
 Thursday, March 11, 1999
 Informal Presentation/Workshop*
 (4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.)

Ponderosa High School Cafeteria
 7007 East Bayou Gulch Road
 Parker, Colorado
 Wednesday, March 10, 1999
 Formal Presentation (7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.)

Holiday Inn SouthEast
 3200 South Parker Road
 Aurora, Colorado
 Thursday, March 11, 1999
 Informal Presentation/Workshop*
 (10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.)

*Workshops are a one-on-one format,
 coming and going as you please.

We would appreciate any assistance you could provide by checking with your neighbors and friends to be sure they are aware of the meetings. I am enclosing the Corps' current mailing list in some of the letters to interested parties. If you received the list, please review it and notify us of any interested party who was inadvertently omitted.

We hope that you are able to attend one of these meetings. If you would like to provide written comments on the Project, please mail them to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District
ATTN: CENWO-PM-C (Miller)
215 North 17th Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102-4978

We want to thank you in advance for participating in the public scoping/information meetings and for providing your comments, concerns, and suggestions in the alternative screening process.

Sincerely,

signed

William D. Miller, P.E.
Project Manager

Enclosures